

The Critic

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Genre Painting in Literature

THE modern theory of art as held among our younger artists was recently set forth, in quite a sententious manner, by a prominent Munich-taught painter, who, during a heated discussion on the subject of idea *versus* expression in art, sprang to his feet, caught up a dinner-plate from the table and held it over his head, exclaiming, 'The man who paints that as it is, is a good artist. It makes no difference whether it has an idea or not. *Technique* is the only thing to admire in a picture.' And this remark may fairly be said to represent the belief of the younger painters who are formulating the art of to-day. The saying has gone forth among them that 'a codfish is as good as a Madonna.' They believe in theory and attempt to demonstrate in practice that a brass pot, a string of dried herring, a clay pipe, an old pair of boots, or a row of battered umbrellas is as good a subject for the canvas as a 'Christ before Pilate,' an 'Orpheus,' or a 'Winifred Dysart.' The traditional belief handed down to us from the stone age of the world, that art is but a symbolized language, intended, like language itself, to transmit and convey ideas, has been beautifully superseded in these modern days by the belief that art is but a decorative affair after all, and that the one thing needful is to please the eye by skilful brush-work and a graded color scheme. It would seem as though the fogginess of the past were fast fading away, for we are now given to understand that 'it makes no difference what you paint, if you but paint it well.' The aim of art is now to convey an idea of expression, not an expression of an idea. The beautiful ideas of a Raphael, a Claude, a Corot have given place to the clever fingers of a Manet and a de Nittis. The mind that so conceived and wrought upon canvas the character of the Madonna, that those who looked upon the face should weep, is nothing as compared to the hand that can present a realistic sardine-box, a blue china plate and a wine-bottle. The thought, the idea, the poetic feeling of a landscape like 'Ville d'Avray' is nothing as compared to the beautiful rendering of textures and clever color gamut of 'A Bric-à-Brac Shop.'

Such is the theory of art to-day, and its analogy in modern literature is so patent as to scarcely need demonstration. The same spirit has infected both alike. The same cry has been raised by the modern writer. He firmly believes that 'it makes no difference what you say, if you but say it well.' Thought, knowledge, ideas, something to say—these are unnecessary, provided one is possessed of a musical ear and the faculty of compiling a medley of pretty-sounding words. Mind, feeling, 'a fine frenzy,' were once thought essentials in the composition of a poem, but the products of to-day demonstrate the old-time belief to be a fallacy. Poetry is now made by cutting up rhythmical language in quatrains, or pouring it into a cast-iron mould called the sonnet. It makes little difference if the product contain a thought or not. A soap-bubble is a thing of beauty though a breath may destroy the illusion. And for

those people who will have their poetry flavored with a little thought, it is dealt out in unintelligible language, so that the poet by his obscurity may gain credit for profundity. The very highest type of poetry is often produced when the writer does not quite understand himself when he 'would be very fine.' As for the novel, the age has again proven the error of Dickens, Scott, George Eliot, Hugo, Gautier and George Sand. Plot, movement, action, dramatic force and a sequential climax are quite unnecessary. Novels are now written to be read from either end of the book with equal ease and continuity of text. A fine study of character, a psychological analysis of motives, is the chief aim of the modern novel, and the beauty of the modern improvement is that fictional people exhibit their character nowadays by word of mouth instead of by deed. The old time maxim is reversed, and we now read 'words speak louder than actions.' And slight withal may be the subject-matter that brings forth a display of character. A chapter of talk about drinking tea on an English lawn may furnish the key to all the people in the book. The importance of the subject is nothing. If the talk is well written and the conversation spicily recorded, may not a man's opinion on tea furnish a criterion for judging of his opinions on other subjects? And is not a tea-talk interesting, too? Again, the modern essayist has undone our veneration for the Johnsons, the Steeles, the Addisons, the Macaulays and the Hebers. Severe thought, a worthy subject and something to say thereon are now tabooed. Thinking makes the head hurt, and people dislike thinking accordingly. The *genre* painter has come to the front. Anything in heaven or on earth is fitted for a subject. A blade of grass, a cat-tail by the pool or the bull-frog in the pool will do. The latter is a particularly good subject. Several pages may be filled up by painting in glowing colors the home and haunts of the frog, his daily life and society, his color and his matutinal diet, together with a dissertation on his reflective spirit. He is only a bull frog that no one cares a rap about. Of course, that is understood, and the reader is respectfully informed that he is not desired to admire the frog but the beautiful word-painting descriptive of him.

And so it is in the drama. The ancients are dead, but the moderns flourish. Butterflies of brilliant colors move across the stage. Costume, stage-furniture and the 'elegant' language of 'fashionable' society are the three essentials. Passion is dead. The mirror of nature lies shattered in a thousand pieces. And who cares whether these characters have the breath of life in their nostrils, blood in their veins, and hearts in their bosoms? It is not necessary that they should have. The clothes make the man; and so long as the bright counterfeit rings well and passes for current coin, why should the genuine be substituted? So, throughout the literature of the day, contemporary methods have left their impress. The *genre* painter is triumphant. A china plate is fitted for the canvas, an indescribable sensation for the poem, a dinner-table pow-wow for the novel, a polywog for the essay, and a flash of diamonds on a white satin background for the drama. Let no modern unbeliever doubt the fitness of each subject to its end. Technique, expression, is everything—the idea and the subject nothing. Glowing colors please the eye while alliterative words sound sweetly on the ear, and it is only when the palette fails and the vocabulary is exhausted that the limits of expression are reached and the modern *genre* painter sits down to wail the unattainable.

By a strange law of our nature we are destined never to steer an even mean course. Rushing from one extreme to another is our inheritance, and the extremes compensate for one another. The ancient cave-dweller who cut upon stone the rude outline of the mammoth had something to say—an idea to convey; and though he expressed it poorly, yet we caught his meaning. This is the extreme where the idea rules and the expression is lacking. The modern house-dweller who draws graceful lines and compiles pretty-sound-

ing language has nothing whatever to say, no idea to convey, no thought to express; yet, like the unintelligent inhabitant of the sea-shell, he decorates his dwelling with color and with the convoluted line of beauty. This is the other extreme, where the idea is lacking and the expression is the all in all. It is in vain that the voice of the seer points out the folly of extremes and the advantage of the mean. It is in vain that he says a literature and an art must be builded up by a unity of idea and expression. A literary reformation, like every other reformation, consists in the revolting party putting as much space as possible between the enemy and itself. The old opinions are wrong in part, *ergo* they are wrong altogether, and had therefore better be abandoned *in toto*. So it is that to-day we find the present pitted against the past. The flippancy, the *chic*, the cleverness of to-day are the substitutes for the thought, the knowledge, the seriousness of yesterday. Bold is the man who proclaims them both wrong, and who intimates that the point of truth lies at neither one end nor the other, but between them.

For the time being, flippant art and flippant literature seem to be enjoying the airy end of the see-saw. An appreciative audience applaud; their senses are delighted by both picture and poem. The critic sings pæans of praise unmixed, and the reviewer draws no bow to shoot this folly as it flies. Every one seems pleased except a few cynical fogies who sit idly by and dare to doubt the enduring power of that house, the only strength of which lies in its pretty exterior, its scroll-work ornaments and its gilded cornices. The grumbler alone looks sadly on and murmurs that he is compelled to choose between the dusted gilt of the past and the gilded dust of the present. He alone sighs for the pure gold—the rugged metal of thought burned pure of dross in the crucible of expression.

J. C. VAN DYKE.

Reviews

Herbert Spencer on State Encroachment.*

THE essays recently contributed by Herbert Spencer to *The Contemporary Review* and *The Popular Science Monthly* have attracted much attention. In them he returns to a subject on which he has often written before—a subject in regard to which his ideas are opposed to all the tendencies of the time. His voice is that of one crying in the wilderness, for he fails to recognize the heart of good there is in the present faith, everywhere so strong, in the power of legislation. Popular government is so new a thing, it gives such opportunity and hope to those who take part in it, that it is to be expected its true purposes will be somewhat over-reached. It is well that Mr. Spencer should point out its faults; but it is idle to expect that he will correct whatever evil there is by his word of criticism. He does not so expect himself, and in that he shows his wisdom. When the spirit of concentration and strong government is so vigorous as now, when men have such unbounded faith in the power of legislation, Mr. Spencer is lifting up his voice in vain. There is little doubt that he exaggerates the evils about which he writes, for all such evils are comparative. Popular government may not be perfect, but it is certainly very much more perfect than those forms of government which it has superseded. There is one advantage which it has over every other form of government, and which Mr. Spencer has been too much alarmed to notice—namely, that it has an inherent tendency to correct its own errors. It may at present incline too much to over-legislation, have a leaning too strong toward the paternal form of government; but that is an evil against which many legislators will set their faces, and a reaction is sure to come in due time. Though Mr. Spencer is, like all prophets of evil, too much given to excess of statement, yet his essays are most sugges-

tive and interesting. He contrives to give them that amount of literary attraction which comes of a striking and novel assertion, which piques curiosity, and which makes a statement seem to be much more important than it really is in fact. In his essay on the new Toryism, for example, Mr. Spencer contrives to excel even the most expert of literary workmen in the novelty of his statement that the Liberals are becoming Tories in spirit. The facts presented in his essay are meagre, and the fault he wishes to correct not of supreme importance; but he dresses up his thought so that it really seems to be very striking and valuable.

In his defence of individualism Mr. Spencer's appeal is worthy of all consideration. In so far as legislation has a tendency to ignore the individual, and to bring all persons to the same level, it is an undoubted evil. This is a tendency far more common in Europe than here, and nearly all Mr. Spencer writes on the subject has its application there only. The real evil is not that popular government is in danger of treading on the rights of its own constituents, but that the spirit of monarchy and arbitrary government has not yet been rooted out in the European states. If the spirit of the old Tories has come down to the new Liberals, it only proves the more conclusively that the tendency to arbitrary power has been bred into the bone and that it cannot be grown out in one or two generations. If the legislators take to themselves the divine prerogative which kings once claimed, it only proves that the old curse remains under a new name and in a new quarter. The evil to contend against is not over-legislation, but the kingly authority which has sneaked into the houses of legislation. It would seem as if Mr. Spencer had too thoroughly studied the movements of custom and thought from generation to generation, to have made a mistake so great as this into which he has fallen. He charges upon the democratic spirit what really is due to the lingering remnants of the monarchical spirit.

"The Story of a Country Town."*

GREATER even than the charm of the book that keeps us awake nights is the charm of the book that we lay down in an hour with a dreamy, satisfied sense of wanting to close our eyes and think over the quiet, deliciously good things that we have been absorbing. Such a book is 'The Story of a Country Town'—a book to last one, even for a first reading, many days and nights; a book to re-read many times in snatches; a book to own and to lend. It is a singular book to come from the West (not that its being from the West localizes it very definitely, for we once heard a lady in the cars regret that she was leaving Kansas to go West, as she understood that people 'out West' were not so hospitable as they were in Kansas); but any west is apt to be at least more alert and practical than what is immediately east of it, and the book before us is one of insight and introspection rather than realism and observation. Not but that it is singularly keen and penetrative, with at times a distinct humor; but it is dreamily keen, deeply and thoughtfully humorous, with a pathos never for a moment strained for theatrical effect. The author seems hardly conscious of either his own humor or his own pathos: he writes of simple fact, and it is the reader who discovers the fine quality of the fact. It is impossible to feel that the writer wrote with any great enthusiasm, either for his work or for any possible fame to come from it. Apparently he has himself wondered at the imperative impulse, too wearying in its importunate insistence to be called a stimulus, that compelled him to devote his tired evenings to the writing of this book. One even hesitates to approach him, now that it is finished, with the praise he has justly won, lest it should be something for which he will not greatly care.

The story is really a story, with incidents and characters interwoven into something of a plot; yet it is chiefly a study

* *The Man versus the State*. By Herbert Spencer. Paper, 30 cts. New York: D. Appleton & Co.

* *The Story of a Country Town*. By E. W. Howe. Boston: James R. Osgood & Co.

of individuals—of people who are not types, but who are possible as unique representatives of human nature. They are the results of almost morbid observation, yet one feels that they might have existed. They are unnatural, but not impossible. The book, in short, is a Western Judd's 'Margaret'—curious, not exactly pleasing, but wonderfully fascinating. Written in the form of autobiography, it recalls even the experiences of the child; but this is no David Copperfield, unable to resist chronicling the frailties and foibles of friends and even parents. Frailties and foibles there are in plenty, but the biographer has the rare and beautiful art of giving the foibles in such a way as to make you think better of the weak character than you would from your own personal observation. Thus, few things could be more forbidding of the kind than the cold, stern character of the child's father; yet we are made to feel, with wonderful skill and delicacy, that the man himself suffered the most from his curse of temperament, and most bitterly lamented it; while that one tender touch of his carrying his little sick boy home so gently in his arms that the child 'thought for the first time that perhaps he loved me,' brings more than tears. The same sort of pathos is in the lighted lamp always kept for the wanderer who would be more likely to come home at night, and we cannot too highly commend the art which did *not* indulge in bringing him home according to the good old fashion of homely melodrama. The religion which consisted in believing that 'everybody saved would be as bad as nobody saved,' and that read its Bible for the sake of finding points for dispute, is lightly but cleverly dwelt upon; and there is much of the delicate humor in that touch about the awkward lad's practising his bow before calling on a young lady, only to find disconsolately that when she came up to him, she stood so close he hadn't room to bow! Besides the chapter called 'The Wisdom of Mr. Biggs,' there is a great deal scattered through the book of the terse common-sense: 'An offence cannot be wiped out by an apology. If it could, we would substitute apologies for hangings.' One could quote whole pages, but we must content ourselves with two remarks comfortable to dwell upon in the present national emergency:

'You will find that the men who carry the fate of the country around on their shoulders do not get on so well as the country. I have always found it safe to trust the country to take care of itself, for the country usually does very well.' 'There was one thing I noticed of Twin Mounds which is probably true of every other country town:—it was constantly threatened either with great prosperity or great danger; but whether the event threatening—the prosperity or the danger—came to pass, the town progressed all the same.'

"Elements of Analytic Geometry."*

WHEN attending the lectures of M. Bresse on the mathematical theory of the Resistance of Materials, in the École des Ponts et Chaussées, the writer was struck with the facility of the students in mastering the analytic demonstrations with which the lecturer covered the blackboard. These demonstrations were not long before the eye (for they were frequently erased in the course of the lecture), and were free from all details of ordinary transformation and reduction; but it was evident that, as means to an end, they were not, in themselves, a source of embarrassment. The facility with which pupils of this and other Continental schools make use of mathematical language and reasoning in the solution of professional problems is no less striking. In fact, they quite generally acquire a mastery of Mathematics, as an organ of expression and instrument of research, comparatively rare with us. It is not our purpose to discuss here the reasons for this superiority, which are, of course, to be found in the method of instruction, but to indicate only one of them—namely, the character of the text-books

employed. A certain completeness and lucidity of statement has rendered our American texts the best in the world for the purposes of 'recitation.' Indeed, they are written to be recited from. They are essentially drill-books, but, unfortunately, the drill secured is in relatively unimportant directions. It is, for example, well to drill the memory, but better to drill the judgment. It is well to be able to prove a truth, but better to possess a method of proving truths in general. There is the same difference between the Continental work and our drill-book that exists between that teaching which gives the student a living language and that which gives him its dry bones, and between the two it is not possible to hesitate an instant. One trains, if you will, the understanding, but to the neglect of all self-reliance and independence. The pupil knows all about the machine—except how to use it.

Prof. Newcomb's work reads more like a French one. It possesses the French clearness, if not elegance; but it is not adapted to the recitation room. Perhaps, if Prof. Newcomb had felt under no obligation to his market, it would have been still less so. It is not deficient in the explanation, illustration, or application of principles, but all this is kept incidental to the object in view—the elucidation of a new method. This gives the book an abstract character which belongs to foreign works on mathematics, and renders them, apparently at least, more difficult than our own. The truth is, our students are too often satisfied with the mastery of a demonstration *per se*, when its only object is to familiarize him with a general form and method of demonstration. It is comparatively of little moment that he should know the equality of the segments of a right line intercepted between the hyperbola and its asymptotes, yet he will rest with this fact as if it were the chief end of his day's work. It is not the object of a text-book in Geometry to develop systematically the properties, say, of the conic sections, but to so apply the Euclidean, Cartesian or Projective methods to the conic sections as to exhibit a general form and method of research. Herein lies the excellence of Prof. Newcomb's work. Teachers have their pet definitions and forms of demonstration, and differ in their estimates of what is important or what is the best order of presentation. No one book will satisfy us all in all respects, if for no other reason than the difference in the material and time at our individual disposal. It is often thought sufficient praise if a reviewer can endorse a text-book from this standpoint of his own needs. It is far greater praise to be able to recommend a work like this as a guide and help to a higher order of instruction.

"Hellerism."*

THE English are always very keen after sport, and most of the best out-door games are of their invention; but we are not inclined to think that their chief effort in this line during the past summer was quite as successful as some others. This latest amusement of aristocratic, literary and scientific London is the pin-hunt. Somebody hid a pin in a public place and a blindfolded thought-reader, taking the hider by the hand, rushed violently into the midst of the expectant mob and hunted for the hidden bit of metal until he found it, which he always succeeded in doing, and in an incredibly short space of time. The pin-hunt has many advantages over the fox-hunt and even over the Anglo-American aniseseed-bag hunt. It does not inflict unnecessary pain on either the fox or the dogs, and it does not disappoint the dogs of their prey. It is less expensive. It requires no special costume, and it may be indulged in even by the clergy. At one of the pin-hunts in London, organized by either Mr. Irving Bishop, who is an exported American, or by Mr. Stuart Cumberland, who is a native Englishman, the pin was hidden by a worthy Canon, whom the thought-reader thereupon proceeded to drag after him

* Elements of Analytic Geometry. By Prof. Simon Newcomb, U. S. N. New York: Henry Holt & Co.

* Hellerism: Second-Sight Mystery. Supernatural Vision or Second-Sight. By Harry Hermon. Boston: Lee & Shepard.

through the streets to the great edification of the assembled multitude. Pin-hunting is more amusing to the audience than the thankless task of trying to guess the number of a Bank of England note sealed in an envelope. Frequent experiment has shown that where the conditions are properly rigid and exactly carried out, the thought-reader only occasionally succeeds in getting at the number of the note, even when handling a 'willing' subject. Neither Mr. Irving Bishop, who gave a flavor of timeliness to his latest effort by suggesting that the principles of the pin-hunt might be capable of application to the detection of dynamite and the discovery of criminals, on the condition of course that the criminal would kindly consent to concentrate his mind on the place where he had concealed his tools or his 'swag,'—neither Mr. Bishop nor Mr. Cumberland, we say, has yet made a serious effort to gain possession of the £1000 bank-note which Mr. Labouchere obligingly holds at the disposition of any one who will read its number through the seals of the envelope which protects it.

While Mr. Bishop's claims are rather indefinite, Mr. Cumberland avows himself to be only a 'muscle-reader,' or a trained interpreter of the involuntary indications given by the subject. But both his performances and those of Mr. Bishop seem to owe much to confederacy—a device which a professional magician would nowadays be ashamed to avail himself of. And really not a few of the tricks of the 'thought-readers' and spiritualists belong to the infancy of the White Art, as the art of modern magic has been called. Nothing done by any man claiming inexplicable power is as effective as the so-called 'second-sight,' which Robert-Houdin invented and which the late Robert Heller used to perform to perfection. Even in Houdin's original trick, he relied almost as much on the wonderful and wonderfully cultivated memory of his son, who served as his subject, as on the device which was at the heart of the illusion; and later magicians have always combined with an exhibition of 'second-sight,' pure and simple, other deceptions, producing a result not unlike by means wholly dissimilar. There is a very scarce French pamphlet, 'La Seconde Vue Devoilée,' by a M. Gandon, published while Houdin was giving his first exhibitions of his discovery, and in the American book before us the secret is now revealed to the American public. Those who have been puzzled by Houdin's account in his entertaining memoirs—one of the most delightful books of autobiography in any language or of any age—may slake their curiosity by a study of Mr. Hermon's explanation; and those who have read Mr. Hermon's book will do well to take up Houdin's memoirs again and read the passages in which he describes his invention and gives amusing instances of its application. With the light afforded by 'Hellerism,' Houdin's dark explanations are rendered much clearer. Perhaps Mr. Hermon's chapter on 'The Book Mystery' (which, by the way, is often modified into what is known as 'The Dictionary Trick') may suggest to some of his readers the principles employed by Houdin in the performance before Louis-Philippe of the startling trick in which the signature of Cagliostro played a prominent part. And if this mysterious hint sends many of our readers to the perusal or the re-perusal of Houdin's book, it will have accomplished its purpose.

Minor Notices.

HENDRIK TOLLENS, the author of 'The Hollanders in Nova Zembla' (G. P. Putnam's Sons), an Arctic poem, was born in the year 1780, at Rotterdam. The poem of which this is a translation was published in 1819, and its popularity was so immense that it has gone through numberless editions, and is familiar to all classes in Holland, from the school-boy to the scholar. Tollens is also the author of the noble national hymn of Holland known as 'Wien Neêrlands Bloed.' He died in 1856. Two friendly hands have worked for years on the translation before us, and though our verdict cannot be very favorable, it would be churlish

not to thank Messrs. D. van Pelt and S. R. van Campen for their labor of love, their honest effort to do what they could to make the poem live and breathe in English, and their enthusiasm in tracing the adventures of the dauntless Barents in an interesting introduction. Masterpieces can be fitly rendered only by master-workmen. No art is more difficult than the art of translation. Have our authors overcome the difficulties of that art? They have attempted to turn the twelve-syllable heroic verse of Holland into the ten-syllable blank verse of Milton. The result is laudable, but it is not poetic, and we are more stirred by Mr. van Campen's historical introduction than by Mr. van Pelt's translation of the poem.

IF 'The Adventures and Discoveries of Captain John Smith' (Cassell & Co.) had been called merely a story founded on the real and supposed exploits of that famous adventurer, nobody could have objected. The volume is simply such a story as accepted and retold by the author, while its reader, who is assumed to be a young person, is led by its present title to receive it as veritable history. But history it is not, as Mr. Ashton might have known had he chosen to make himself familiar with some contemporaneous narratives, of which there are several of comparatively recent discovery. This redoubtable captain has had the posthumous good fortune of being accepted by the world for more than two centuries and a half at his own estimate of himself—a good fortune, to be only rightly measured by his unrestrained boldness of braggadocio. He was, nevertheless—as the early navigator de Vries said of Van Twiller, the early Dutch Governor of Manhattan—'an amusing case,' and the more amusing the better he is understood. Even to boys Mr. Ashton's volume would probably have been quite as entertaining if they had been made to see that Captain Smith was often quite as unconscionable a liar as the Baron Munchausen. As a story the book is extremely interesting. The only objection to it is that it is set forth as history.

TWO NEW BOOKS on amateur photography—'Photography for Amateurs,' by T. C. Hepworth (Cassell & Co.), and 'The Amateur Photographer,' by Ellerslie Wallace, Jr., M.D., (Porter & Coates, Phila.)—bear witness to the increasing interest in this admirable amusement. Both are brief, and easily carried in the pocket, and both go so carefully into every detail of the chemistry and practical work as to give the impression to the general reader that the art of photographing must be a difficult one. But in reality we know it is not difficult, for 'almost any one' seems to be able to do it and to succeed in it. The young lady whom we last saw amusing herself most profitably with it had even made her own camera. It is probable, too, that the apparent abstruseness of the directions is merely the result of the great care to make the work really easy. We cannot forbear calling attention to the delightful covers of Dr. Wallace's book, at once durable, flexible and attractive.

'THE COURT of the Tuileries,' by Catherine Charlotte, Lady Jackson (Franklin Square Library), is a vivid and picturesque presentation of an exciting historical period—from the restoration to the flight of Louis Philippe. It is entirely historical, no mingling of fiction being attempted, yet it has all the interest of a story, from the author's piquant use of words and clear, definite method of grouping her facts and her characters. A distinct general impression remains with the reader who has finished it, as well as a clear conception of the leading men and women of the time and their relations to each other, which is more than can be said of some more elaborate attempts at historical detail. The illustration of the fickleness of the French people is particularly well given.

'CURIOSITIES of the Search-Room' (Franklin Square Library) is 'a collection of serious and whimsical wills,' and is very entertaining and unique. It is a wonder that

the subject has not been treated before, considering the well-known tendency to eccentricity in the making of one's last will and testament. The wills of many distinguished characters are given from Telemachus and Sennacherib down to the famous Agassiz, who so simply described his as the last will and testament 'of Louis Agassiz, teacher.' The wills are of all lengths, from the one of eight words, which seems to have been the most successful in avoiding litigation, to that of Turner, which resulted in a Chancery suit of four years, in which several tons of documents were produced.

Recent Fiction.

'RALPH, THE DRUMMER-BOY,' translated by W. J. Gordon from the French of Louis Rousselet (Henry Holt & Co.), is a manly, invigorating and thrilling story of the days of Washington, recounting the adventures of a young French lad who came over here with the forces of our French allies. It is written for boys, but it is interesting to any one from the skill, peculiarly French, with which the story is almost made an exciting novel. Some of the events are decidedly sensational, and certain Indians of the Huron tribe play a rather remarkable part in the adventures; while we must again utter a solemn protest against the deliberate mixing of fiction with history, in books for the young, which appears in this story in imaginary events in the life of Benedict Arnold after his treachery. The author confesses in a foot-note, but this does not excuse him. 'Tell a lie for only a *six-pence!*' exclaimed Mr. Pecksniff in scorn; and we are tempted to ask with equal wonder what the supposed gain may be from adding fiction to history; for the parts that are historically true are as vivid and entertaining as those that are wholly false. Historical fiction is bad enough, but fictitious history is inexcusable. The book is one to buy, notwithstanding, for it is wonderfully clever.

SOMETHING in the very name of 'Lancelot Ward, M. P.', by George Temple (Franklin Square Library), attracts us. We have a premonition that we are going to enjoy ourselves, and that in taking up the book we shall find ourselves in good company,—not that 'M. P.'s' are always good company, but that something betrays to us that we are not going to be deluged with the frailties of the aristocracy. The story is, in truth, delightful; the plot being simple and unpretending, without resort to complications unnecessarily hideous, and the style possessing that unconscious finish of tone dear to the critic's heart. The conversations are admirable, and the individuality of the characters perfectly distinct, while every character is deserving of its portraiture. It is a story to be read, not for the sake of the ending, which is just a little unsatisfactory, but for its continued, unwearying level of excellence in every chapter. The gentlemen are not too gentlemanly, the heroine is not too heroic, the simple country girl is not too simple; but, dealing with average human nature, there is a pleasant intimation that on the whole human nature is a very good thing—as we all know it is.

'WHAT FIDE REMEMBERS,' by Faye Huntington (T. Y. Crowell & Co.), is a pretty story, interesting for the elders as well as the young girls for whom it is nominally written. Its tone is that of religion without cant, and there is a great deal of delicate humor in it, almost too delicate for any but the elders to appreciate truly. The sufferings of the little girl compelled by her poverty to wear inappropriate silk dresses to school; the record of the same little girl in her diary that she thinks of becoming a Christian 'in about two months'; a similar record that she 'means to be a very good girl, so that everybody will notice it'; and her effort, even while quite sincerely falling on her knees in prayer, to have her dress fall about her as prettily as the teacher's does, are instances; and Donny Williams's letter to his cousin is as good as one of the famous 'William Henry letters.'

'A FAIR COUNTRY MAID,' by E. Fairfax Byrme (Franklin Square Library), is a pretty story of a maid of humble life with rather more than the usual quota of lovers of all classes and rather less than the usual amount of even the simplest coquetry. The management of the affair is quite original, and it is pleasing to have less villainy than usual. The squire does not harm the pretty girl, and though the minister comes near to harming himself for love of her, all turns out well in the end, though somewhat sorrowfully. A better story than the average of its class.

'IN PARTNERSHIP,' by Brander Matthews and H. C. Bunner (Charles Scribner's Sons), is a compilation of stories already familiar to readers of the magazines, who will, however, be glad of them in this separate form. Only two of them, 'The Documents in the Case' and 'The Seven Conversations of Dear Jones and Baby Van Rensselaer,' were written in partnership, the other six being separate efforts of the authors merely published together. All are good, and have the merit of being decidedly original, with pathetic touches now and then. The 'cutest' touch of all, to our thinking, is the closing of the sixth 'conversation' with the lovers' determination never to see each other again, and the beginning of the seventh with the peal of their wedding bells. This leaving of things unsaid is a mine which authors have not yet sufficiently worked.

"The Limit of Expression."

TO THE EDITORS OF THE CRITIC:

'A FINE conscience is a great aid to worthy literary expression' says Mr. Maurice Thompson in THE CRITIC of September 6, and truly the conscience is not only an aid, but a necessity, where the noblest and highest literary work is concerned. There may be, and is oftentimes, more sparkle without it, but work done without it must break like a bubble when its little hour is over, and pass into nothingness, leaving no impression upon the action or spirit of its time. An hour of *ennui* may be pleasantly beguiled, the fancies of the reader may be tickled, his own butterfly life may be thereby palliated for him and his self-satisfaction increased; but his soul is not reached, his aims are not made loftier, he is no nearer to the ideal somewhere dormant within his nature, for having enjoyed the rainbow sparkle of this literary bubble. And expression cannot 'become the end instead of the means,' as in this modern, dainty, melodious, polished verse to which Mr. Thompson refers, except where this fine conscience is lacking. Such subtle spells as these meaningless word symphonies are surely more worthy of syrens than of artists. Is it not, indeed, a question as to whether an artist, in the highest sense of the word, can stoop below truth, and waste the subtleties of his own rich imagination on fashioning a form which shall beguile less gifted souls into believing the dangerous, unsatisfying beauty infused with life? For truly the gift of expression, whether in prose or verse, is a great power, and should be used to noble ends. We crave in this age a less cynical saying than that of Talleyrand in regard to the province of words, and hampered as every artist feels himself to be by these word limits, he will at least make his expression the suggestion of the thought to which every responsive reader will give depth and fullness. Here, as in all noble work, the ideal must be immeasurably beyond the artist's attainment, and here also there must be some gleam of inspiration in his wording or it will be colorless and uninspiring to his readers.

The musical strains that affect us most deeply must reach our inmost souls by a personal interpretation which is akin to inspiration, while colder natures listen unmoved. All perfect poems are the utterance of a soul at moments higher than it knows; the thought is heaven-inspired, the rendering faulty—as man's best must ever be, in its degree. But studied sympathetically, as poetry only can be understood, the inspiration will be at least partially reflected in the

reader's mind, in spite of these inadequacies of expression. And because of them, each true poem reaches an interpretation more deeply fraught with meaning than its writer ever dreamed of, as the poet's central thought is amplified and overlaid by the witchery with which loving souls make it their own. So also in painting, we could turn from the realistic school, where nothing is left to the imagination, to seek a higher art quality and a more enduring life in something which appeals, with its wondrous suggestions of depth and power and soul and mysterious beauty, to our own highest individual conceptions of what the rendered scene should be. Our imagination is roused to its own best effort, and we love and make our own, by supplemental creation, the true artistic thought. Is not this the interpretation of this 'most fascinating aroma' which must ever embalm man's noblest creations?

BALTIMORE, MD.

FRANCESE L. TURNBULL.

Dr. Bartol Challenges Mr. Arnold.

IN A LATE British periodical, Matthew Arnold puts Balzac below Rousseau and George Sand in the moral point of view, and questions the permanence of his fame, scouting by the way any mention of his likeness to Shakspeare. Will you allow me to challenge this judgment? Mr. Arnold mistakes the abiding repute. Balzac, though he paints human life perhaps too much in tints of fate that remind us of the Greek tragedians, is far deeper and more true to nature than Sand or Rousseau. The teachings implied in his tales come home closer to the conscience and heart than do their essays and stories. There is in him more than Gallic blood. He is the greatest of novelists, unmatched in his guild or kind as a social philosopher, and unsurpassed in his literary style. As a romance-writer, he has no peer as yet in the English tongue.

MANCHESTER, MASS., 12 Sept.

C. A. BARTOL.

The Lounger

THE FALL BOOKTRADE-SALE has opened well, and the publishers seem to think that the outlook is a good one in spite of politics and a dull money market. The sale is conducted as usual by Mr. 'Joe' Foster, whose name, by the way, is not Joe, though as 'Joe' the publishers and book-sellers all know him. One of the best-pleased men I met at the sale on Tuesday was Mr. Ticknor, of James R. Osgood & Co. Mr. Ticknor is so thorough a believer in the popularity of the American novel that the cheap reprints of foreign fiction do not disturb him in the least. Within a fortnight his house has published three American novels—'A Country Town,' by Mr. Howe, 'Where the Battle was Fought,' by Mr. Craddock, and 'Dr. Sevier,' by Mr. Cable. Each of these is now in a third edition, and a fourth will soon be on the press. Mr. Howe and Mr. Craddock are both new men, and these are their first attempts at novel writing. Mr. Howe, I believe, has never printed any fiction before, and Mr. Craddock only a bundle of short stories which appeared in *The Atlantic*; so that their books have sold on their merits. This is encouraging to young authors, and proves that there is a demand for good American stories.

THE MADISON SQUARE THEATRE has made a new departure, striking out upon a line as different from the one the management followed at first as milk-toast is from turtle-soup. The way the new play was received on Monday night shows that the palate of the theatre's patrons takes to the spices of the soup as naturally as it took to the simpler preparations that were laid before them on other first nights in this house's history. 'We are no worse and we are no better for such a play as "The Private Secretary,"' said a friend as we left the theatre. 'No worse, I grant you,' I replied, 'but certainly we are better for a hearty laugh, and a laugh provoked by such harmless fun.' He had to admit the truth of what I said, for the play had put him in the best of humors with himself and with the world in general. Any one who wishes to be thoroughly amused should see 'The Private Secretary' at the Madison Square, where every part is well played and the whole piece rattles along with the smoothness and 'go' of a red-wheeled buggy on a shell road.

AT THE NEW PARK THEATRE on Monday night Mme. Janish, as her name is now spelled, made her first appearance as an English-speaking actress. She did remarkably well, considering that she spoke a foreign tongue; but the play is a dull one, and if she did not wholly succeed in interesting her audience, the fault was the play's and not the actress's. Mme. Janish is not a genius, but she is a capable and refined actress, with a pleasing stage presence and an earnest manner. Her pronunciation of English is surprisingly good. Our stage needs more actresses like Madame Janish, but fewer plays like 'Louisa,' which may be a very good closet-drama in the original, but is totally unsuited to the demands of the modern theatre.

M. OCTAVE UZANNE, editor-in-chief of *Le Livre*, the leading literary journal of France, thinks of coming to America in May or June of next year. He will be a welcome visitor, for the attention paid to the literary affairs of this country in the admirable review over whose destinies he presides has won many American friends both for the paper and its editor.

IT MUST AMUSE an author to see his fictions accepted as veracious history. Mr. Frank R. Brown, in an article in the October *Harper's* on Monterey—'The Gateway of the Sierra Madre'—seems to have fallen into the error of supposing Mr. Janvier's 'Legend of Padre José' to be the work of a chronicler, rather than of a romancer. At least I infer that he has, from this allusion to it: 'Hard by is the once flourishing monastery of the Franciscans, now degraded to the base office of a city prison, with its one lordly palmetto that the "Padre José" loved and cared for so tenderly in days of yore.' The 'Padre José' of Mr. Janvier's story is a purely mythical priest.

THERE are two things that the average Cuban can do to perfection. He can get up a revolution every year or two without any backing to speak of, and can roll a cigarette or a cigar in a way to bring the blush of despair to the cheek of emulation. A man who buys and sells several million pounds of tobacco every year tells me that a Cuban workman will roll a thousand cigars with two pounds less of tobacco than any one else would use, and actually make them look bigger than those that contain a larger amount of the weed. How heavily an American's fingers go to roll a cigarette, and how flabby is the result! Yet the native Cuban will roll one faultlessly with his left hand, while he gesticulates with his right. Verily, the Ever Faithful Isle is not without its place in the terrestrial economy.

The Prime Meridian.

THE International Congress to determine a prime meridian met in Washington on the first of October. The advocates of Pyramid Metrology will rejoice to learn that President Barnard, *facile princeps* in this important branch of science, has found himself obliged, on account of a pressure of college duties, to resign the position of Chairman. Gizeh—their choice—is as nearly as possible the worst zero of longitude. It is needless to say that it stands about the same chance of being adopted as Mrs. Lockwood does of being installed in the White House.

There are two classes of thinkers. The one talks loftily of progress, and predicts a race of beings as far above that of to-day as the average modern Englishman or American is above the ancient cave-dweller. He dreams of a *mens sana*, beneficent, sublime, pure in spirit, enshrined in a perfect mental and physical development. The other finds in the saurian the possible fate of other genera, and denies that there is the slightest trace of either progress or decay in mankind as a race. The diminutive horse of the West Indies, well fed, selected and groomed, becomes in a single generation a fairly powerful animal. Intellect in the Anglo-Saxon during the last century has certainly shown marked improvement, but no such manifest superiority over the freedom of thought of buried empires when in their prime as to enable one to indicate it as a positive gain to humanity at large. Now if Cato had recommended a system of weights and measures based upon the ten-thousandth part of the radius of Stonehenge, with a sacred *medimnus* equal to a fraction of the cubical contents of the biggest block, Lucian would certainly have denounced it as a superstition. Pyramid Metrology must seem to the Italian and the Russian ministers scarcely as serious as some of our countless variants in religion, which the Catholic and the Orthodox inspect with curious amazement. President Barnard had by his most admirable treatise vindicated the United States from any responsibility for this strange error. Imported from England, the rapidity with which it gained adhe-

rents, and the tenacity with which it has survived his keen satire and the rude shock of Mr. Petrie's measurements, make it nevertheless an interesting psychological study. Oddly enough, while Gizeh is apparently the worst of prime meridians, 180° falls in the Pacific Ocean where the loss or gain of a day would put the world to the least inconvenience. We are reminded of the ingenious suggestion of an American with whom we passed an evening at Ain Es-Sultana, watching the 'royal spring' in the Jordan Valley glitter in the moonlight as it rushed down the steep rocks under a mass of rich and varied foliage. He was much disturbed at the three Holy Days in Jerusalem—Friday, Saturday and Sunday—and proposed to form a Society to Promote a Common Unit of Lord's Day Observance. His scheme was simple. The Archbishop of Canterbury and selected Divines were to embark upon vessels of the respective nations of Christendom, and sail to the eastward. The Sherif of Mecca, and the most narrow-minded and fanatical leaders of 300,000,000 of Mussulmans, starting from India, would pick up the representatives of Morocco at the Pillars of Hercules. The fleets timed to arrive at Jaffa on a local Thursday would disembark their pilgrims, and Mohammedanism, having followed the setting sun and gained a day, while Christendom had faced the chariot of Phœbus and lost one, the Grand Rabbis with Jews out of every nation, and Science, represented by the officers of the S. P. C. U., would perform a united service in the Court of Omar, Temple, Church and Mosque.

The metric system was adopted in the heat and confusion of the French Revolution. It is not popular in the United States. At least ninety per cent of the engineers and master mechanics are opposed to it. It is therefore especially to be regretted that President Barnard, who is understood to favor its adoption in some form, will not be in a position to advise the Conference, and guide its deliberations; but none the less his counsel should be sought. He would unquestionably urge great moderation. Otherwise its chance is hopeless. Some one in Congress, turning over the Blue-Books of the English Parliament and lighting upon the extremely amusing speech in which were depicted the sorrows of a mother whose child had been imprisoned for selling a 'handful' of marbles, and buying a 'pennyworth' of toffy, will describe a United States marshal arresting a camp of miners for claiming Red Jacket by the 'foot' instead of the centimetre, or bartering a 'nugget' of gold for a 'keg' of whiskey.

The Decay of Genius.

[J. P. Mahaffy, in *Macmillan's Magazine*.]

THERE is a general feeling in the world that the present is not an age of genius. Despite the many brilliant discoveries which have been made, despite the enormous pains taken to develop the intellect of the human race, despite the large number of clever and educated men there are, a conviction is abroad that there is a lack of genius. Nor is this merely the discontent often felt with the present, and a longing retrospect to a former age of gold. There seems really to be good evidence that however improved our civilization may be, however increased the number of men who work in concert for the advancement of knowledge, the individual greatness which marked some previous epochs is no longer to be found.

The more strictly we define genius, the more authorized such an opinion will appear. The proper definition of it was laid down by Kant, who showed that the mere making of great and useful discoveries, such as Newton's, though admirable in many ways, does not constitute genius in the strictest sense. All that Newton or most other scientific pioneers have discovered would have been put together or brought out gradually by a number of lesser minds in process of time. Or if it is denied that they would, it is certain that they reasonably might. On the other hand, there is no probability whatever, nay, it may be regarded as impossible, that what Shakespeare or Goethe did, could ever have been done except by their individual *genius*, or incommensurable natural gifts, working under favorable conditions. Such is genius in the strictest sense, which bestows on the human race gifts to be obtained in no other way, and by methods which can neither be taught nor imitated.

This quality it is which cannot be said to have increased, or to have been developed, in our age. It might have been thought that when education reached the lower classes, when many more men were brought within the light of knowledge, many 'mute inglorious Miltons' would have found their voice, and enriched us with their song. It is not so. Neither in eloquence, nor in poetry, nor in painting, nor in the art of leading men in politics, have we found successors to Shakespeare, or Burke, or Joshua Reynolds, or Pitt. The same kind of decadence has been seen

in other days. The Athenians never had any dramatic masterpieces after a short period—two generations ending the fifth century B.C. They never produced first-rate eloquence after the fourth century B.C. I need not multiply examples. But I will take even a lower level as regards our own day, and assert, that in our professions we do not find the genius—to speak openly—that our fathers had.

In the Christian pulpit oratory has become curiously poor and scarce. The Irish, that great nation of talkers, cannot claim more than two or three orators in the Church of England, they have none in the Church of Ireland, and apparently none—since the death of Father Tom Burke—in the Roman Catholic Church. The same thing may be said of legal eloquence. Since the death of Chief Justice Whiteside and of Mr. Butt, the bar of Ireland does not boast a single orator in whom the public have yet found genius. In politics, the same thing is true. Nor can we say that in any branch the deficiency of eloquence is made up by deep and original thinking. There is nothing of the kind. So again in the medical profession; while there are certainly many more able and competent practitioners than we have ever possessed, there seem to be no longer the master minds, whose works are still unequalled monuments of acute observation and subtle inference. How completely, for example, does M. Pasteur stand out as a solitary genius in his department! The same may be said of M. Cobet in the field of classical philology. There is no one living who could be compared, either in Germany or in England, to the great scholars of former days, except this Dutchman. We live in the days of a respectable and well-instructed mediocrity. The few men of genius we possess in medicine, in eloquence forensic and sacred, in scholarship, are old, and belong to the now closing generation. We cannot see that they have successors. Is it possible to assign any natural causes for this, or is genius, even in its wider sense of great and original talent, a heaven-sent gift, a spirit which bloweth where it listeth, which we accept with joy, and regret with sadness, but which we can neither produce nor hinder?

The little we know concerning the production of genius will help us to give some answer to this interesting question. It is notorious that while ordinary talent is more or less hereditary, that amount of talent which approaches genius, not to say genius itself, is quite sporadic and apparently capricious in its appearance. In other words, even the physical conditions at which we can guess are so complicated and easily disturbed, that we find ordinary parents, who have other ordinary children, producing at a particular moment one child of a totally exceptional quality. There is no ascertainable law among the instances furnished by history. Alexander the Great was an only child, Newton an eldest born, Descartes and Kant sixth and seventh in a large family, and so on. Some are delicate in health, some exceptionally strong, some studious, some at first idle; some have an able father, some an able mother, still oftener both are obscure, and perhaps commonplace, people. So far then it might be argued that unless we undertake to study the physical conditions of the production of the human race with a minuteness impossible in modern society, the origin of genius is a matter of haphazard. Even if careful observations were possible, we could never reach a law without the help of an experiment, and this is practically impossible. The world has drifted further and further away from the notion of Plato, that the most valuable of all the animals in the world should have the conditions of its production most carefully superintended.

But if we should infer from these facts that genius, because sporadic, is altogether beyond the reach of known natural causes, history affords us strong objections to such a conclusion. Though any ordinary parents seem capable, at an exceptionally favorable moment, of producing a child of genius, there are epochs in the history of nations when this does not occur. Nothing is more remarkable than this symptom in a decaying civilization—that it loses the power of producing individual genius. It may be objected that I am merely giving divers names to the same thing, and that the decay of a nation means nothing more than the inability to produce individual genius. This is not so. It is notorious, for example, that the Roman Republic grew great and prospered without the help or guidance of any great political or literary genius. But even if the two facts were not distinct, they are distinct expressions of the truth that the production of genius is not haphazard, and that there are historical conditions which perhaps promote it, others which certainly prevent it. The history of Greece after Alexander, the history of the Byzantine Empire, of Egypt in its later days, of China, all afford notable examples of the latter. It is possible therefore to have general conditions when no parents, even the best, produce children of genius. Like some fair river, which, after running a splendid

course through rich plains and wooded valleys, ends its course amid dull flats and muddy slob, so do nations end a splendid record with dull and ignoble epochs of senile impotence, when the course of affairs runs smoother and slower, till it is lost in the great Lethe of the ocean. If it be true then that our own is an age in which genius is not produced, we are in the face of this serious problem; is it only a momentary failure arising from the sporadic nature of the thing, or are we coming to one of those epochs of decadence, of which it is the most hopeless and melancholy symptom?

There are many reasons for rejecting the latter inference. Though deficient in genius, our nation does not show the other symptoms of lethargy and decay which we find in Chinese or Byzantine decadence. There is much intellectual activity of divers kinds, there is wide commerce, scientific discovery of the joint-stock kind, political interest; social life aims at least at not being dull; the vulgar herd are fully impressed with the idea that the age is an age of universal progress, very unlike, for example, the national despair of public life which is said to possess all Spanish society. On the other hand, the fact that along with these very hopeful signs, there is a marked and curious decay of genius points the conclusion that there must be some definite cause of hindrance, and not a mere accidental gap in the sporadic production. If this be indeed the case, it is of the last importance to find them out, and see whether they are of a kind to be obviated if not remedied. This is the practical question which has prompted the writing of an article on so obscure and debatable a subject.

Before proceeding to answer it, it will be necessary to give some additional facts in proof of the decay alleged, and also to analyze more closely what we mean by this decay. Do we mean that the highest quality is no longer really produced, or do we only mean that when produced it is thwarted and dwarfed by the circumstances of the age?

It is a very general belief that real genius cannot be quenched, save by killing the body. According to this theory it must show itself, whether thwarted or fostered, in spite of ignorance or any other obstacle. If this be so, the long ages of national decadence of which we have spoken are merely ages in which no genius whatever originated. Had it done so it would have rescued its age. This opinion seems to have based itself on the many cases of early misdirection which have been overcome by the strong will and determined bent of great and original minds. In many cases the true bent and scope of such minds have not been discovered by their parents, and attempts have been made to urge them into some line of life foreign to their taste. With ordinary people this early taste is but a poor guide, and the directors of youth do well to disregard it. In the case of genius, it is believed that all such misdirection must fail, and that the heavenly spark will not be extinguished by any breath of man. These cases of a successful struggle against obstacles of the gravest nature are accepted as conclusive that genius must force its way into eminence, and that therefore all attempts to protect or foster it are in any case useless, perhaps mischievous. We shall find that this conclusion may be true, and yet not at all in the sense here intended. On the other hand, is there any one that has not known people, who, in spite of the greatest talents, seemed to have failed in life? Is it not a common remark, that had such an one had fair play, he would have made a great writer or speaker, or leader of men? In very prosperous countries, like England, where many paths of life are open and success easy, this social phenomenon is not frequent. But in a struggling or in a diseased society, where the avenues to fame are few and crowded, and beset moreover with artificial obstacles, such cases are not uncommon. Making full allowance for the partiality of friends, and even for the fact that superficial talents produce more than their due effect in society, I cannot but hold that this is the true estimate of the matter, and that though genius will overcome, and even gain by, a certain kind of obstacles, there are many cases where it has died away into mediocrity under the effects of adverse surroundings.

It is, indeed, quite possible that great public excitement, that days of noble strife and exalted patriotism, may so affect ordinary parents as to enable them to produce extraordinary offspring. Yet it is surely more reasonable to say that in the days of Elizabeth, for example, the circumstances of life, both private and public, were such as to give scope and opportunity to every original mind then produced, than to say that at that moment there came into existence an extraordinary quantity of original minds, who created a splendid epoch. This is most clearly seen in the case of military genius. Had the great Duke of Wellington lived in a generation of peace—say in the days of his son,—he would have lived and died in respectable obscurity. Had the

heroes of the Indian Mutiny not found that extraordinary theatre for the display of their valor, they would have passed away without earning their well-deserved fame. Man is, after all, very much the creature of circumstances. Nor will this axiom find itself contradicted if we examine more closely the cases which we have mentioned, and which seem in conflict with it. It is not proven that a certain quantity of opposition, of difficulty, of obstacles overcome, may not be the very condition necessary for the proper development of solid and lasting genius. The analogies of the physical and the moral nature of man are too strong to be here evaded. Thus, too, in art, it is often the conventional shackles—the necessities of rime and metre, the triangle of a gable, the circular top of a barrel—which have led the poet, the sculptor, or the painter, to strike out the most original and perfect products of their art. Obstacles, if they are extrinsic, and not intrinsic, only help to feed the flame. But it would not be easy to prove that a lazy, slothful, idle society afforded this kind of stimulating obstacle in the development of genius.

The difficulty of the present day is, however, one of a very different kind. It is the question whether among the adverse conditions, protection and misguided patronage be not the most serious. It is almost a truism in literary history that Court patronage is bad for men of letters, that the pay and encouragement of the State, instead of promoting, hinders literary perfection. The apparent exceptions to this law are explained by the fact that a great outburst of that kind of talent, starting in revolution or opposition, does not die at once when taken under the protection of the Court, but fades out presently, in a generation perhaps, from vigor to grace, from grace to feebleness. Were it not invidious, we could point out, even in our own time, great artists debauched and degraded by Court favor, not to speak of that bureaucratic patronage of art, imported by well-meaning but stupid persons from Germany, which, under the appearance of promoting art from a central source, is likely to strangle all the independent efforts of solitary genius by its protection and guidance, if not by its contempt or neglect. When we consider the earlier and well-recognized cases of Court favor spoiling art, we shall find this to be the main agent—the establishing of a Court style, and Court traditions, which the protected artist could not dare to violate, nay, rather, which he came to regard as of the essence of his art, because it pleased the highest arbiter of taste.*

It seems to me that the most fatal of all influences upon genius—that of superior protection and systematic encouragement in the form of direction—has taken in our own day a new and deceptive form, and is possibly the main cause of the decay in the intellectual greatness of our age. If, as is conceded, Court favor and support has been so deleterious to the art of grown men, what must be the effect of similar patronage beginning with the child, and escorting him under its pernicious care from the cradle up to mature life? And yet this is now the course pursued, not only in the case of special arts, but in the case of every promising intellect of any description. The nations of modern Europe, beginning specially with the English and the Germans, have got a fixed idea or prepossession that (1) by the wide spread of education through all classes, they will not only increase national happiness and lessen national vices, but that they will discover and foster all (2) the hidden genius of individuals, formerly lost for want of opportunity. The former principle—that of national happiness increasing in direct proportion to education—need not here be discussed. What we are concerned with is the second notion; and this, a careful consideration has led many thoughtful minds to regard as a great blunder, a false expectation which will be, nay, which is being, grievously disappointed. Instead of discovering and fostering undeveloped genius, the present methods of rewards and punishments in education are certain to overpraise second-rate faculties, to starve or strangle some first-rate qualities, and to treat others with contempt and neglect. The reason is obvious. Starting with the fundamental mistake that the Government could only foster education by a system of rewards, the system of competitive examinations, which in the old seats of learning were properly used as a test and complement of teaching, was adopted as the one broad principle. Of course such a principle implied comparisons, and no comparisons are possible except in fixed subjects and in a fixed way of

* It is not easy to obtain perfect agreement on each case, but I will venture to cite one which seems to me instructive. Those who have properly studied the works of the great Racine, cannot but feel that they have before them a dramatic poet of the very highest order, and one who at another and more favorable epoch would have stood among the first tragic writers of the world. But his greatness is so marred by the conventionalities imposed upon him that he has not laid hold of the world's interest. The man who is reproducing Euripides' masterpiece, the *Hippolytus*, on the French stage (*Phédre*), felt obliged to provide his hero with a secret passion for some woman, must either have found himself sorely coerced by the fashion of his day, or must have been degraded by it in the most signal manner.

knowing these subjects. Moreover, as comparisons in *originality* are impossible, they must be instituted in *learning*. To make the test even fairer, and equalize, as far as possible, the chances of preparation, limits of age are imposed, so that the problem to be solved is not simply to attain a certain pitch of learning, but to attain it, or seem to attain it, before a certain age.

Thus, by the exclusion of every mind which is late in development, which is peculiar in development, which suffers under inadequate bodily support, which has for a time mistaken its true scope, the educational masters of the country have pointed out the only method which leads to material comfort, and to the leisure necessary for high intellectual productions. Many parents are being bribed to adopt it by the base reward of being saved the expense and trouble of educating their children. There are even those who make direct profit out of their children's successes. This principle is more directly recognized in the result fees given to teachers. Thus selfishness and cruelty are often not only condoned, but rewarded. For what is now the apparent duty of the average parent, who does not think these things out for himself, but adopts the directions of the State as his guide? He must set to work as early as possible, and push forward his children with all his might, if perchance they may be prepared to win one of those 'under 14' scholarships which are considered almost a provision for life. If the child shows peculiar aptness for his studies, and learns his lessons quickly, instead of giving him the benefit of it in leisure, new subjects are crowded upon him in the hope of more prizes. He is taught to believe that his paramount duty is to labor for examinations, and his greatest possible success is to appear first in the list. So far is this dreadful system now being driven, that in a handbook on competition published a few years ago for the use of parents, they are warned—without a suspicion of cynicism—to discourage their children in taking any special interest in any pursuit, or in devoting to it such time and attention as may interfere with their training in the subjects for competition, and in the manner required for the examination. This tendency has infected not only public schools, and the public service, but even the old seats of learning and the professions. Teaching in the proper sense—the guidance of a superior mind, leading the young with leisure, and fostering all the independent thinking they may show—has given way to coaching and grinding which seeks only to prepare for a special test. The Professor who will not lecture in this way, however original and stimulating, will be deserted for the crammer 'who passes his men'—the parasite batten on a diseased system. In recent legislation the yearly income of university professors was fixed at a maximum of £900, whereas the parasite sometimes makes as many thousands. But while it is idle to blame clever business men for adapting themselves to the wants of their age, it is of deep importance to expose the system which fills our professions with over-examined, over-coached men, who have lost every spark of originality granted them by nature in the long worry and weariness of this so-called education. If it be true that genius can really be stifled, that an original thinker by birth may be reduced to a commonplace inhabitant of the world, no system can be conceived more likely to accomplish this end. He is taken from the beginning, he is pampered and threatened, coaxed and coerced, into following the particular course laid out for him; he is sent to schools where herds of average boys are taught with him on a fixed system, which he is not allowed to outrun or to evade; he is persuaded that not learning, but learning in a certain way, is the object before him; he is taught living languages, and living sciences, as if they were dead; and so he is led on, from examination to examination, till he comes into life with a great reputation, and no real thinking to sustain it. He has been compelled to forego independent thought as waste of time, from his early childhood; is he likely now to recover it?

This evil does not pervade England alone; it is rampant also in Germany. A commission of able and experienced physicians, chosen to inquire last year into the schools of Alsace-Lorraine, with a view to reforms as regards overwork and the national decay of eyesight, state in the preamble of their Report that the students of eighteen to twenty now beginning clinical work in the hospitals, after the maximum of general preparation, are decidedly inferior to the far less educated students of twenty years ago. They are becoming as a class dull, shortsighted, wearied creatures, whose natural quickness and power of observation are gone, while they read and remember quantities of books. I need not speak of those more delicately organized natures, who break down under pressure, and whose apparent success is coupled with permanent mental lethargy, if not [with physical disease and death.

Here, then, there seems to be an active cause accounting for

the decay of genius in our generation, a cause, too, which is increasing in its action, and which will produce more and more mischief till it is removed. If this opinion be correct, it will be proved by the fact that what residue of genius does manifest itself will come from outlying regions, from those who by accident, or by the eccentricity or the fortune of their parents, have been brought up outside the current of the age.

To suggest remedies for a great social evil is perfectly idle till the mass of public opinion begins to declare against it; and this cannot be expected, till a large number of men professionally employed in education, and of special experience, reiterate their protests publicly. Any one who inquires, by conversation, will find that there is a strong feeling of the kind among real educators. It has not yet taken the form of a systematic crusade. Then it will be time to propose and discuss the reforms which will preserve what there is good in competition while remedying its abuses.

But it is necessary, before concluding, to notice a reply to all this reasoning, which might seem satisfactory to many. Granting, it will be said, that there is really this decay, it is amply compensated by the larger light and better knowledge spread among the masses. The object of any State is not to produce, or try to produce, sporadic and exceptional genius, but to make the great body of citizens wiser and better. Whatever system attains this object must be pursued without any sentimental regrets about the imaginary Shakespeares and Dantes whom we lose. There are also many men of the democratic type, say Americans, or from our great business towns, who will assert that the apparent decay of individual greatness arises from this very higher education of the masses; that among many clever and cultivated men the genius does not stand alone and unapproached, but merely *primus inter pares*. The inferior, they think, have been brought up to a higher standard, the superior have only apparently been depressed. Let us grant the principle that the happiness of the masses increases in proportion to their education, though it is by no means self-evident, and seems to me true only under important limitations. But we cannot here turn aside to discuss so intricate a question. Let us rather take issue on the facts.

People who think that any training whatever can bring up ordinary minds to the stature of genius, or near it, show little understanding for the facts of history. Does the great number of respectable, cultivated, graceful poets in the present day make up for the absence of a constellation like Shelley, Keats, and Byron? Do we look for one moment to this mass of writers, now brought up by training and culture to a higher level, as an adequate substitute, or do we not rather rely on the one or two 'real poets' that survive, as saving our age from the reputation of mediocrity? Is it because there are a number of accomplished senior wranglers, who can solve difficult problems proposed to them, that the splendor of such men as the discoverer of analytic geometry, and of quaternions, is no longer pre-eminent? Do all the well-trained theorists in music eclipse some modern Beethoven? Is the average of painting indeed so high that the Sistine Madonna is only a few degrees above the work of the first rank of modern painters? Is it not rather obvious, and patent even to the vulgarst observer, that no average art, no average knowledge, no average mental power however high, can for a moment compare with, far less eclipse, the flights of those few divine souls, who have not left their age, but even posterity, far beneath them. To say that high training approaches or replaces genius—to say that a large number of lesser thinkers will together make up a result in any way comparable to what it produces, is profoundly and thoroughly false.

It is not certain that all the mathematicians since Newton, put together, would replace his loss to the human race; it is quite certain that all the playwrights of the world since Shakespeare would not replace his loss to the human race. Artistic sense such as his seems to be *sui generis*, and perhaps never produced a second time. These considerations will help us to answer the remaining point, the assertion that the improvement of the bulk of the human race should be the only care of the legislator, and that if the masses become wiser and happier he need not concern himself with anything else. But the present system of competition by examinations is attempting this at the cost of thwarting and dwarfing all the noblest, the most sensitive, and the most original minds in the society men propose to make wise and happy. Is it indeed worth this expense to bring up the average public, the ordinary stupidity of the day, to a higher and more respectable mediocrity? Is it just that the better minds among us should suffer because they are better, and because they must degrade themselves to the level of successful examinees? Is it indeed impossible to devise such reforms, that

while the common mind shall still receive its due, the exceptional shall get bread, and not a stone? If we regard the advancement of the race, is it historical to say that any amount of average minds, however prepared, have done as much as those exceptional spirits who work by a sort of inspiration? If, therefore, we even take the standpoint of the objector, may we not argue that for the advancement of the race in wisdom and knowledge, the very first condition in importance is to foster, or if we cannot foster such a thing safely, to secure liberty and leisurely development for, those who are likely to make large strides in knowledge?

The case is still clearer if we consider the happiness of the majority our main object. For if we throw aside sordid pleasures, if we discount 'the ape and tiger' in man, and consider what most conduces to the happiness of the better and more civilized masses, what source can we find to compare with the artistic masterpieces given to us by those few men whom the world justly regards as its greatest benefactors, as well as its greatest ornaments? What national improvements in education can be pointed out which have given the high pleasure, and produced the real improvement, which are due to Homer and Æschylus, to Dante and Shakspeare, to Mozart and Beethoven, to Rembrandt and Raffaele? And if there is anything really effective in raising human nature, is it not to imbue men with the sense of its dignity—its dignity as shown by the noblest and most perfect specimens?

It will be said that a large system of national education is of all things what helps the ordinary man to appreciate this human excellence, and to take pleasure in noble things. So far then national education is doing a great work, which should be encouraged and developed with all energy, but also with wisdom. For if, in the effort to make as many men as possible appreciative of genius, you destroy the few and delicate plants which were about to bear new fruit of that rare excellence, you may make your age at most cultivated and learned, critical about the excellence of the past—but all true vitality and progress will stop, and this condition will presently lead, it may be to a refined, but not the less to a real, decay.

Emerson.

[From *The Spectator*.]

SIR: I observe with interest that a courteous writer in your number of August 16th has used my little book, 'A Western Journey with Mr. Emerson,' as the text for some remarks on what he calls 'The Emersonian Cult.*' He has in some respects misapprehended the scheme of the book, and has, in consequence, fallen into one or two errors; these have a certain importance, as being made the basis of inference as to the quality of Mr. Emerson's genius; and I shall, therefore, be glad if you will allow me the opportunity to say a word or two in your columns.

1. My small brochure is made up of two things—the account of the 'Western Journey,' and a quite disconnected short, supplementary paper relating to Mr. Arnold's lecture on Emerson. The first, which is the main part of the book, has no comments on Emerson's characteristics as a writer; it is simply a slight contribution to a knowledge of his personal characteristics and every-day conversation; and his remarks are preserved simply as being *his*, and not as being very significant or as being at all 'weighty.' They are things which I happened to have mentioned at the time in family letters, written to a relative of Mr. Emerson. I kept, as the book states, no diary, and took no notes. Having made up a club paper some years ago from these letters, I lately concluded to print it, not without the explanations here repeated and the express warning that 'the pudding was small and the plums few.' It will be observed that there was never any set attempt to record what I had heard; and the book states in various places that there was much which I did not hear and much which I did not record. It may be added, that in preparing the book for publication I purposely refrained from inserting anything which rested merely in my recollection. It will appear then, I think, that the writer in my paper is unfortunate in referring to these casual remarks of Mr. Emerson, thus preserved and thus presented, as illustrating his supposed 'thin, transparent mood;' and in saying that the book was written 'on purpose to record the very few remarkable sayings which [the writer] brought away from close intercourse with Emerson;' and that it is published 'for the purpose of setting the few weighty remarks of Emerson which. . . he happened to remember and can record.' Equally mistaken is the suggestion that these remarks of Mr. Emerson, these slight and partly-preserved out-

givings of daily intercourse, are supposed to be in any way illustrative of general suggestions, in a wholly disconnected part of the book, upon Emerson's genius.

2. My allusion to the sense that Mr. Emerson seemed always to have 'of a certain great amplitude of time and leisure' is misapprehended by the writer in *The Spectator*. It has no reference to his quality as a writer; it relates to the impression made by his personal bearing and manners.

3. As to the main point, of the justice of my remark that 'Marcus Aurelius was not a man possessed—Emerson was. There is in Emerson an inflaming religious quality which searches the soul of his reader with singular power; his morals are not merely morals,—they are morals on fire,—you will not wish to allow me space to say what I should like to say. But as an old and careful reader of Emerson, I am well persuaded of its accuracy. It is true also, as your article insists, that Emerson was a cool watcher of his own mental processes, a keen, shrewd critic of himself, as well as of all else, sharply observant of all that presented itself as inspiration, as if feeling the shoulders of the alleged heavenly messenger for his wings. But yet throughout the whole body of his thinking and his writing there is felt the presence and the light of a profound religious inspiration. Test the matter by reading a page or two of Marcus Aurelius and then a page or two of Emerson. The difference between them may be indicated by a happy phrase of your own, when you said on February 2 last: 'What Emerson will always be remembered by is his noble and resonant depth of conviction,' etc. It is this *resonance* which makes him, and which comes from profound beliefs. He was, as I have said elsewhere, 'flooded and full to overflowing all through his life with a sense of the presence, the omnipresence and the instant operation of what he called the "over-soul." His apprehension and acceptance of this was no merely intellectual matter; it was something that penetrated into the substance of his being and moved him like a vital force.'—I am, sir, etc.,

CAMBRIDGE, MASS., Aug. 27, 1884. JAMES BRADLEY THAYER.

[Of course we read carefully all Mr. Thayer's explanations; but after all is it not certain that this little book was published only because Mr. Emerson was of the party, and that there were various fragments of his conversation to record? As for the word 'possessed,' reverence is one thing and 'possession' by the divine spirit quite another. We should attribute reverence in at least equal degree to Marcus Aurelius.—ED. *Spectator*.]

Current Criticism

JOAQUIN MILLER'S RETICENCE:—He liked 'the decent English way of keeping your name down and out of sight till the coffin hides your blushes,' and has observed it. He dined with Dante Rossetti, and met at table many distinguished men; but he has not betrayed confidence. He was present at other intellectual feasts, and, although there was strong temptation to ignore the decent custom 'which forbids the mention of men in channels such as this and cuts out nearly all that is of interest in journals,' he has said nothing to give offence to any. As regards himself Mr. Miller is, contrariwise, outspoken. And this gives value to the book. The diarist tells us frankly the story of his life; how he was farm laborer, miner, pony-express man; how he practised law and was elected judge of his county; how he fought Indians, and was, indeed, 'the busiest of men in trying all means to get on.' 'Memorie and Rime' is consequently flecked with pathos. The story of the English travellers completing the circle of the world, undertaken to restore the health of a child of ten, 'a pale little cripple on crutches,' is one of the most pathetic that have come to us from an American pen; and the records of the wild and checkered life led by Mr. Miller himself in the Sierras include incidents profoundly attractive.—*The Athenæum*.

RECENT AMERICAN FICTION:—It is certainly a fruitful year which adds to the list of distinctively American novels Mrs. Jackson's 'Ramona,' Mr. Cable's 'Dr. Sevier,' Mr. Harris's 'Mingo,' and other Sketches, and Charles Egbert Craddock's 'In the Tennessee Mountains' and 'Where the Battle was Fought.' Each of these volumes has given some new aspect of life, and presented it, not with the hard, cold exactness of realism, but with the large, impressive outlines of a true and masterly insight into the life delineated, and that kind of imaginative identification with it which makes great works of fiction possible. Those pessimistic students of our literature who see nothing but imitation and the secondary skill of culture in contemporary American books, may well take heart as they open the pages of these

* Reprinted in *THE CRITIC* of September 20.

latest ventures in the difficult art of fiction, and discover in them a new order of men and women, and the freshness and fragrance of a world as yet unexplored by the novelist.—*The Christian Union*.

MRS. MOULTON'S MERITS:—'Firelight Stories' is the latest volume in which an American poetess of real mark—Louise Chandler Moulton—has gathered together stories which delight not only the young, but those among the old whose feeling is keen and fresh. Mrs. Moulton's conceptions are always poetic, and they are not the least so when the literary form that they assume is that of prose. In practising the art of poetry she has acquired the quality of terseness. She would find it difficult to be diffuse, and an almost impossible task to be obscure. A vein of humor is apparent in the short stories before us, but that which is yet more evident is their unstrained pathos. The writer is moved by a quite exceptional sympathy for the characters she creates or has observed. A woman of extreme culture, she is at home with the humble and at home with children. Though Mrs. Moulton is an American, many of her tales deal with English life; and it is hardly possible but that she knows that life thoroughly.—*The Academy*.

ROBERT HOE:—The impression retained by the friends of the late Robert Hoe, who died at his beautiful summer home in Tarrytown, New York, on the 13th of September, at the age of seventy, is of a kind to appeal with confidence to the admiration of fairer generations than ours. The civilized world knew him as a manufacturer of printing-presses; art students knew him as sensible to the romantic charm of works of the imagination; business acquaintances knew him as responsive to the power of modern ideas; hundreds of beneficiaries in this city of his birth and protracted residence knew him as a pattern of Christian philanthropy; but his friends knew Robert Hoe as a man who liked to hide his life, who preferred to perfect himself rather than to build a reputation, and who was endowed with a singularly happy moral balance, and a genuine gift for the good and the true. Like all such natures, he had a real love for living a life of his own, apart from the unsympathetic lives of others; he might even have said with Lacordaire, 'One can do nothing without solitude.'—*Harper's Weekly*.

M. DAUDET'S ARTISTIC MASTERPIECE:—Mr. Henry James and M. Émile Zola are at one in giving the first place in M. Alphonse Daudet's remarkable series of fictions to 'Numa Roumestan,' of which Mrs. J. Granville Layard here presents us with a translation that, although free and flowing, is nearly everything that could be desired. Mr. James says: 'Daudet's other works have their inequalities, their anomalies, certain places where, if you tapped them, they would sound hollow. The beauty of "Numa Roumestan" is that it has no hollow places; the logic and the image melt everywhere into one.' M. Zola says: 'I do not think that he has hitherto reached such an intensity, either of irony or of geniality.' We are disposed to agree with these undoubtedly weighty opinions, the more especially as M. Daudet, since writing 'Numa Roumestan,' has wandered into paths where the bulk of his English admirers at all events must decline to follow him. At the same time, we are bound to say that we find more genius, more humor, and that of the two kinds that recall both Dickens and Mr. Besant, in 'The Nabob,' and then it has, as 'Numa Roumestan' has not, a Joyeuse family to comfort English readers with the notion that, after all, simple virtue has the best of it, even in this world and on the other side of the Channel.—*The Spectator*.

'THE DANCE OF MODERN SOCIETY':—'In the joint behoof' of health, economy, good manners, intellectual improvement, and morality, Mr. William Cleaver Wilkinson 'impleads' the Dance. It is unwholesome because it is done late at night, in hot rooms, in thin dresses, at times when the brain of the man of letters has just been gobbling up his nerves, marrows, and other internal arrangements as aforesaid, because people go out into the air afterward and catch cold, and because it is accompanied and followed by flagitious indulgence in supper, and sometimes in wine (printed so). It is extravagant, not only because it costs money in decorations and so forth, but because it causes ladies to waste money in the impious desire of being better dressed than other ladies. In this particular the American newspapers are much to blame. It is, it seems, their habit whenever a 'gay party or ball' takes place, 'especially when society is holding its court at the seaside or at watering-places,' to give an account of how each lady was dressed, and 'what length of trail she drew'; nay, so infectious is this particular

vice, that a descriptive paragraph is accorded to those who 'deserve such mention' even 'by a morning toilet, gracefully harmonized with their figure and gait on the street.' Now for all this folly and wastefulness the Dance is, as every one must admit, primarily responsible.—*The Saturday Review*.

Notes

—THE new volumes of Mr. Froude's *Life of Carlyle* (Scribners) will be ready in November. The period covered is a more interesting one than that treated in the previous volumes, because it embraces the years when Carlyle mingled most among men. He tells in the first volume the story of the burning of the MS. of the 'French Revolution' and of the rewriting of the book. 'In ten days,' writes Mr. Froude, 'he had made substantial progress, though with "immense difficulty." Still, "it was and remained the most ungrateful task he had ever undertaken." But he felt that he was getting on with it, and recovered his peace of mind. He even began to be interested again in the subject itself, which had become for the time entirely distasteful to him, and to regret that he could not satisfy himself better in his treatment of it. Notwithstanding his defence of his style to Sterling, he wished the skin was less rhinoceros-like.'

—E. W. Howe, author of 'The Story of a Country Town,' is engaged upon a new novel, which, it is said, will be more cheerful than his first story.

—R. Worthington announces among his new juveniles 'Jack in the Pulpit,' a poem which was originally sent by the author to Mr. John G. Whittier for use in 'Child Life,' and which he added to and amended to its present shape. This is all explained in an autograph letter from the poet, a *fac-simile* of which is published as a sort of preface to the book.

—An American edition of *The Quiver*, an 'illustrated magazine of Sunday and general reading,' which has a circulation in Great Britain larger than that of almost any other magazine published in that country, is about to be published by Cassell & Company. This is an announcement that should interest every Christian household, for nothing in this country covers just the same field as *The Quiver*. Its list of contributors embraces some of the best-known divines of England, and a number of equally well-known American writers will be added to it.

—A number of persons have enquired as to the identity of the 'Old Girl,' L. W. H., whose letter was published in THE CRITIC of Sept. 20. The lady is now Mrs. Lucy W. Hawes, of Hohokus, N. J. Fifty years and more ago, she was a Miss Williams, of New Bedford, Mass.

—A new edition of Bayard Taylor's 'Views Afoot' is announced by G. P. Putnam's Sons.

—'Nathaniel Hawthorne and His Wife' will not be published till next month.

—Brown University receives by the will of the late Senator Anthony the 5000 volumes of American poetry purchased by the testator from the estate of Caleb F. Harris. It is said to be the best collection of American verse in existence.

—A volume called 'The Genius and Character of Emerson' has been compiled from the papers read before the Concord School of Philosophy last summer. Osgood & Co. will publish it. The same firm also announce a three-volume edition of the American Actor Series, which was first issued in six volumes.

—Mr. A. B. Frost is guilty of a book which he calls 'Stuff and Nonsense,' but which Messrs. Scribner seem to think has more stuff than nonsense in it, for they have printed it in very handsome style, and will soon publish it. Mr. Frost has simply let his pencil run riot. Every funny thought that has come into his head he has illustrated, and the result is a book which will be the occasion of much hearty laughter.

—*The Americo Vespucci* is the name of a new Italian paper in this city.

—A bound volume of *The English Illustrated*—the first—is just ready, and we are inclined to think that the magazine is much handsomer in this form than in single copies. At any rate, it makes a very fine book. The cover, which has the same design as the cover of the monthly parts, looks particularly rich in boards.

—We have received the catalogues of Dodd, Mead & Co. and Scribner & Welford, giving special lists of rare old books. The former is made up principally of books from the library of a well-known collector whose recent losses in Wall Street compelled him to sell the treasures from his shelves. The latter is a catalogue of books pertaining exclusively to the literature of music. It describes some very rare volumes.

—It is said that Charles Egbert Craddock is a pen-name—that the author of 'In the Tennessee Mountains' is in reality a Mr. N. M. Murfee, of St. Louis.

—An illustrated article on 'Unsuccessful Candidates for the Presidency' will appear in the November *Magazine of American History*. Its publication should be suspended for a month, so that it might include portraits of General Butler, ex-Governor St. John, Belva Lockwood and—?

'A Narragansett Christmas' will be the Rev. E. E. Hale's contribution to the literature of this year's holidays. The book will re-introduce some of the characters with whom the readers of 'Christmas in a Palace' were made acquainted a year ago.

—No. 18 of *The American Journal of Philology* has the usual number of careful and exhaustive book-reviews, with a distinct leaning toward Germany in this department. The critical department is on the whole intelligent, appreciative and temperate, though Prof. Morris 'pitches into' Prof. Humphreys *apropos* of a risky emendation to Thucydides proposed by the latter. Other articles by Professors Easton, Bloomfield, Elliott, and Frothingham occupy deservedly prominent positions in the body of the review. This is the only number in which we have missed the characteristic hand of the editor, whose careful supervision, however, is omnipresent.

—Dr. Curry writes in the current *Homiletic Monthly* of the late Dr. John McClintock—one of the very ablest of Methodist theologians.

—Captain John Ericsson has a three-page communication in *Nature* of September 11 on the subject of 'The Temperature of the Sun's Surface,' illustrated with views of his solar pyrometer erected in New York this year.

—A lecture on the province laws of Massachusetts, delivered before the American Antiquarian Society by Hamilton B. Staples, has been published by Charles Hamilton, of Worcester. It is an interesting and instructive account of the laws which the settlers of Massachusetts framed for their government. The lecturer shows to what extent those laws were founded on English legislation and to what extent on the exigencies of their own situation.

—Prof. J. L. Campbell, of Washington and Lee University, has published through the Putnams an excellent work on the 'Geology and Mineral Resources of the James River Valley.' It is not a cumbersome report, such as geological surveys usually produce, but a readable and usable description of the region studied by the author. Its aim seems to be practical as well as scientific, having for a main object the presentation of the mineral and productive advantages of this region. It has an excellent map and several illustrations.

—Mr. W. M. Griswold writes: 'Will you kindly correct statement, on page 155 of THE CRITIC, that I am preparing a work on "pseudonyms?" I have no such work in view, nor have I ever planned such a one.'

—Mr. Eshobel, author of 'How Much I Loved Thee,' considers himself somewhat aggrieved by the review of his poetical drama which appeared in our issue of September 20. We have not room for the letter he sends, which fills eleven pages of note-paper, but give one paragraph: 'THE CRITIC's statement that Shakspeare would have written novels (if living to-day) and not dramas, I have nothing to do with—unless it means that the drama is a species of literature no longer to be tolerated, the novel having usurped its place. I should certainly not admit that proposition, for it is plainly not tenable. One reference alone would ruin it—*viz.*, that whenever a novel is capable of being dramatized, it always is. In my opinion it always will be.'

The Free Parliament.

[Communications must be accompanied with the name and address of the correspondent, not necessarily for publication. Correspondents answering or referring to any question are requested to give the number of the question for convenience of reference.]

QUESTIONS.

No. 803.—1. Is there an English translation of 'Manon Lescaut.' If there is, where can I get a copy of it? 2. Where can I procure the number of *Swinton's Story-Teller* which contains 'Le Tombeau Blanc,' recently mentioned in THE CRITIC?

DENBURY, MICH.

G. H. S.

[1. A translation—not the only one—with a life of the author, the Abbé Prévost, illustrated with engravings by Tony Johannot, was published in London

in 1841. It is out of print, but an order left with an importing house, such as Scribner & Welford, for instance, might be filled—in time. 2. The paper was published at No. 20 Lafayette Place, New York, but died some months ago. A copy containing the clever story in question can be obtained only by chance.]

No. 804.—Who wrote the following line, and where can I find it? 'In the down hill of life, when I find life declining.'

NEW LONDON, CONN.

L.

No. 805.—Who wrote 'Be True,' of which the first lines are as follows:

Thou must be true thyself,
If thou the truth would'st teach;
Thy soul must overflow, if thou
Another's soul would'st reach.

ELLINGTON, N. Y.

CAN.

No. 806.—Where can I get a copy of the poem beginning

There is no death. The stars go down
To shine upon some fairer shore?

NANTICOKE, PA.

I. I. H.

No. 807.—Has 'The Mysterious Stranger,' a story found in *Chambers's Repository*, been reprinted in any collection of stories published in America?

ELLICOTT CITY, MD.

A. V.

No. 808.—Is *The Theatre* (London) to be had in New York? If it is, what is the price per copy?

ALPINE, N. Y.

A. B. L.

[It is sold by Brentano Bros., Union Square, New York, for 50 cts.]

No. 809.—Who publishes Phoebe A. Hanford's 'Daughters of America?'

HULMEVILLE, PA.

W. G. P. B.

No. 810.—Who is the author of the following lines (a fragment, I suppose), quoted from memory, and, perhaps, imperfectly:

They are slaves, who fear to speak
For the fallen and the weak;
They are slaves, who will not choose
Hatred, scoffing and abuse,
Rather than in silence shrink
From the truth they needs must think!
They are slaves, who dare not be
In the right with two or three!

BLUE ISLAND, ILL.

L. W. MACC.

ANSWERS.

No. 721.—Besides 'The Parlor Muse,' David Ker has written a book of which the title, or sub-title, is 'The Boy-Slave in Bokhara.' He is a regular contributor to *Harper's Young People* and *The New York Times*. He is constantly travelling, but a letter addressed in care of the Liverpool Investment Building Society, 67 Lord Street, Liverpool, Eng., would probably reach him.

No. 785.—1. 'The Fight in Dame Europa's School' and 'Modern Christianity a Civilized Heathenism' were both written by Henry (?) Pullen, a Minor Canon, if we mistake not, of Salisbury Cathedral. 2. 'Supernatural Religion' was written by John Robert Seeley, author of 'Ecce Homo,' etc.

No. 789.—3. Games of solitaire are described in Mrs. E. D. Cheney's 'Patience' (Boston: Lee & Shepard). I have had several copies, and tried many of the games.

WEST NEW BRIGHTON, N. Y.

E. W. W.

No. 790.—The poem 'On Picket Duty' is by Mrs. Laura Winthrop Johnson (author of the memoir of her brother, Theodore Winthrop, which appeared last spring). It was first published in *The Atlantic Monthly* of April 1864; then in a volume of verses called 'Poems of Twenty Years,' published by her in 1874. (De Witt C. Lent, Broome Street.) It will be found in Part III, called 'The War,' page 136.

WEST NEW BRIGHTON, N. Y.

E. W. W.

No. 792.—1. I am told by English people and New Englanders that Beauchamp is not pronounced as written, but as Beechem; and I know of Virginians who never spelled their name Tagliafiero but Tallaifero, and pronounced it not as Tolliver but Tollifer.

SAN FRANCISCO, CAL.

E. G. L.

No. 795.—Joseph was the Christian name of the Brennan who wrote 'Our hearts ever answer,' etc. The poem is given in Prof. Kendrick's 'Our Poetical Favorites,' first series.

NEW YORK CITY.

W. B. H.

No. 797.—If I had the Post-Office address of W. B. H., I would gladly send him the words of the song of the Indian chief, beginning 'The rain fell in torrents.'

BLUE ISLAND ILL.

LAURA. W. MCCLINTOCK.